

2019 ESSAY CONTEST RULES AND REGULATIONS

This year's Essay Contest title is:

HOW WOULD OUR FOUNDING FATHERS RESPECT THE AMERICAN FLAG TODAY?

To locate a post near you, go to www.legion.org & click on find a post and enter your zip code.

Any student enrolled in grades 9 through 12 in a public, private or parochial school, or who is home schooled in Pennsylvania is eligible to participate.

Students MUST prepare essays without assistance and provide a statement to that effect on the last page.

All essays MUST have a **COVER PAGE** containing the following:

- The Essay Title
- Student's Name, address, telephone, & email address (if applicable).
- Teacher's verification of Student's Grade Level.
- School Name and Address if applicable.
- Sponsoring American Legion Post Number, Name & Location.
- Parent or guardian's name, address and phone number.
- Student's signature.

ALL essays MUST be no less than 500 words and no more than 1,000 words.

Typewritten essays are preferred but not required.

No reference shall be made, for or against, any political candidate or political party affiliation.

The title MUST appear on page one (1) of the essay, as well as the cover page.

Essays shall be judged on the following:

- **Proper English structure.**
- **Accuracy.**
- **Extent of Information**
- **Originality** - *Any material not original must be cited in a bibliography for the information of the judges, stating publication, volume, page, date, publisher and author. Anything cited from the internet must include a verifiable internet address such as: <http://pa.legion.com/about/our-history/>*

DEADLINE DATES BY OR BEFORE:

1. **JANUARY 18, 2019** - Essays must be submitted to a sponsoring or **LOCAL American Legion Post**. Each school may select 1 winner for each American Legion Post in their school district.
2. **FEBRUARY 1, 2018** - The local American Legion Post's winning essay shall be selected and forwarded to the local **DISTRICT American Legion Essay Chairperson** (as listed in the current American Legion Directory).
3. **FEBRUARY 22, 2019**, - The "District's" winning essay shall be forwarded to the appropriate **INTER-DISTRICT ESSAY COORDINATOR** (as listed in the current American Legion Directory)

4. **MARCH 15, 2010** The "Inter-District's" winning essay shall be forwarded to the Department of PA Essay Contest **Sectional Vice Chairperson** (as listed in the current American Legion Directory).

5. **APRIL 5, 2019** the "**Sectional's**" winning essay shall be selected and forwarded to the Pennsylvania Department Essay Chairperson, **Michele Deems**,

6. **MAY 11, 2018** - The Department Essay Chairperson shall have arranged for qualified judges who will select this year's Department of Pennsylvania's Essay Program.

1. PRIZES TO BE AWARDED

The Department of Pennsylvania State Essay First Place Winner will be awarded a \$3,500, a plaque and a trip to the PA American Legion Convention in July to read the winning essay to the assembled delegates.

2. The Second Place Winner will receive a \$3,000 and a plaque.

3. The Third Place Winner will receive a \$2,500 and a plaque.

**PA AMERICAN LEGION JUDGING ADDENDUM TO THE PA AMERICAN
LEGION ANNUAL ESSAY CONTEST BROCHURE**

FOR LEGIONNAIRES ON JUDGING THE ESSAY CONTESTANTS:

It is recommended to have no less than 3 judges

The Essay Chairperson ensures that essays meet minimum requirements before including them in judging packets. The essays are between 500 & 1000 words. To ensure fairness, separate copies of each qualified essay are given to the judges with all **identification information** removed. (Cover Sheets are removed, and essays get ID codes on each page (#1, 2, 3 or A, B, C., etc.).)

JUDGES are encouraged to mark up and make notes on their copies as they wish. **They must then rank each essay in numerical order**, starting with number 1 in first place, and so on. The ranked essays are then returned to the chairperson for tallying. Judges are not identified to the students and they should not know of any of the competitors.

WHAT JUDGES SHOULD LOOK FOR:

PROPER ENGLISH STRUCTURE: Is the essay well designed and planned? Are the spelling and grammar correct? Does it have clear sentences and paragraphs? Does it lead us from a beginning subject and opinion, through supporting paragraphs, and finish with a strong conclusion?

ACCURACY: Is the writer believable? Does the essay make sense? Did it stay on topic, making clear points or did it meander around and confuse? Are there any gaps or contradictions? Does it contain misconceptions or unsupported assertions? Different points of view or approaches to a subject are welcomed but they must be supported by reasonable arguments and facts. (A good bibliography substantiates those facts.)

EXTENT OF INFORMATION: Does the essay contain enough information and facts to effectively tell us about the subject and support opinions? An essay should tell us something of value, not just meander around making repetitive general statements to get up to the minimum word count. Did the writer research the subject via multiple reliable sources or did they appear to get all their information from only one place?

ORIGINALITY: Does the writer tell us something new? Do they present information in a new way or from a different perspective? Do we believe it is the writer's own words? Does it look like sections of text were copied from someone else? Does the writing style change from one section to another? Do they make

assertions or cite facts that are unsupported or clearly inaccurate? (May be an accident but shows poor attention to detail.)

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Any material that is not original must be cited in a bibliography for the information of the judges, stating publication, volume, page, date, publisher and author. The guidance from the pamphlet is outdated and does not address internet citations. Anything cited from the internet must include a verifiable internet address such as: <http://pa-legion.com/about/our-history/> I included this in the 2019 Brochure.

CHECKLIST FOR ESSAY CONTESTANTS

1. **Is your essay between 500 and 1,000 words?** Essays have been disqualified for being too short. We count the words in the actual essay. We do not count the cover page, title or bibliography. **Doing the minimum rarely wins contests.**
2. **Did anyone proofread the essay?** Double check spelling, grammar, run-on sentences, etc. (There are programs that catch many common errors.)
3. **Is the Essay easy to read?** It is easier for judges to read larger fonts like 12p Arial or 10p Verdana. Double spaced lines are appreciated and leave room for comments (on copied pages).
4. **Don't put your name on essay pages.** (We just have to cover it up for judging.) Signatures can be on the cover sheet (which judges don't see).
5. **Use the exact title from the pamphlet.** It should be on the first page of the essay as well as on the cover sheet. **Do not change the title.**
6. Does the coversheet include the following?
 - The Essay Title from the pamphlet.
 - Contestant's Name, address, telephone, & email address.
 - Teacher's verification of Student's Grade Level.
 - School Name and Address
 - Sponsoring American Legion Post Number, Name & Address.
 - Parent or guardian's name, address and phone number.
 - Student's signature.
 - (Contact an Inter-district Chairperson from your area found on the pamphlet if unsure)
7. **Is there a Bibliography?** It is hard to be competitive at higher levels without one. The PA Legion Essay Pamphlet does not specific a bibliography format nor is a sample provided. Students typically use the format required by their school. We must be able to verify each source listed using the information provided in the bibliography. Links to the internet sites must work. We must have the ability to tell where a specific fact or quote comes from. One way is to number each source in the bibliography and to put that number in parentheses after its referenced fact or quote. Some students put the bibliography in order by author and cite the author's name in parentheses.

8. Are there copies of the essay? It is unlikely, but an essay can be damaged or lost. It is wise to send a copy directly to your legion contact for tracking as well as to your local Legion.
9. Submit your essay by the required date on the pamphlet. If there is not a contest at your school, you can submit directly to your local American Legion Post. **Contact the coordinator listed below if you have any questions.**
10. **Double Check to see that your essay was received.** There have been rare cases where an essay has been misplaced or lost. Don't just leave an essay at an American Legion Post without following up. Don't mail it to the PA American Legion Headquarters in Harrisburg.

If the contestant lives in: _____ Counties, they can contact the 22nd District Coordinator, Lynn John at 717-860-9203 or norlynnjohn@gmail.com to ask questions or check on an essay submission.

